

## House Republican Press Release

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### **Rep. Miller Proposes Measure to Reduce Gun-related Crime**



#### *Also Supports Proposal to Revive Gun Trafficking Task Force*

A measure that has proven effective in significantly reducing gun-related crimes in Richmond, Virginia, and is being adopted in several other cities around the country has been introduced by state Representative Lawrence G. Miller, R-122<sup>nd</sup> District.

Representative Miller said he also will co-sponsor legislation to provide \$1 million in new funding for the currently inactive State Police Gun Trafficking Task Force, a unit that has had considerable past success in apprehending individuals who illegally sell firearms to criminals.

“With gun-related crime once again on the rise in Connecticut, the state legislature needs to act as soon as possible to give the courts the authority they need to get violent criminals off the streets and keep them behind bars for years,” Representative Miller said. “The bill I have introduced would provide a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in prison for individuals who use illegal guns to commit crimes. Criminals convicted under this legislation would not be eligible for parole or suspended sentences. They would stay in prison for five full years – and be incapable of maiming or killing innocent people.”

“Criminals armed with illegal guns are making cities across the country – and here in Connecticut - almost unlivable for honest, hard-working people. The bills I am supporting will help keep guns out of the hands of violent criminals and ensure that those who use them are locked up for many years. My ‘Project Exile’ proposal has been a huge success in Richmond, Virginia. It has not only taken gun-toting thugs off the streets, but also has been an effective deterrent to criminals who might otherwise have been tempted to buy illegal guns and use them to rob or kill someone,” said Representative Miller.

Under ‘Project Exile,’ Richmond police refer drug dealers, users, convicted felons or suspects in violent crimes who are caught with guns to the local U. S. Attorney’s office which prosecutes them under federal statutes that carry mandatory sentences of at least five years in federal prison without parole – and longer for repeat or aggravated offenses. Project Exile was credited with helping cut in half the number of murders committed in Richmond only two years after it was put in place, Representative Miller said.

“The success of Project Exile has not gone unnoticed,” Representative Miller said. “It has been so effective in Richmond that other cities – including Atlanta, Birmingham, Alabama, Fort Worth, Texas, New Orleans, Norfolk, Virginia, Philadelphia, Rochester, New York, and San Francisco are adopting it. If we adopt it as a state law, we could see a similar dramatic drop in gun-related crime – not just in one or two cities, but in municipalities throughout Connecticut,” Representative Miller said.

“The Gun Trafficking Task Force had several major successes after it was established in 2000,” Representative Miller said. “Unfortunately, funding for this highly-effective program was suspended a few years ago because of budget constraints - and has not been restored since. The proposal I will co-sponsor would provide \$1 million for the task force for the 2006- 2007 fiscal year and another \$1 million for the 2007 – 2008 fiscal year. If we can get the task force up and running for at least two more years, it will give law enforcement an effective tool that will play a significant role in keeping guns out of the hands of criminals.”

“If we enact the Project Exile initiative and pass legislation to fully fund the operation of the Gun Trafficking Task Force, they will make Connecticut cities safer for law-abiding citizens, children and employers. They will save lives, encourage middle class families to remain in our cities, and stimulate economic growth. Curbing gun-related crimes and gun violence is essential if we want to revive our large urban centers. If these measures become law, they will help us make that dream a reality,” Representative Miller said.